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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 001541

SIPDIS

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FOR NEA/ARP AND NEA/IR

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [KU](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAN](#) [RELATIONS](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN AFFAIRS MP SOUNDS ALARM BELL ON IRAN

REF: A. KUWAIT 781

[1](#)B. KUWAIT 486

[1](#)C. KUWAIT 50

Classified By: CDA Alan Misenheimer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) On October 3, in separate conversations with Post, Kuwaiti MP Mohammad Jassem Al-Sager and MFA Director of Arab World Department Ambassador Jassem Al Mubarakhi relayed their grave concerns that Iran is leading the region towards conflict. Though they acknowledged that the removal of Saddam Hussein was a positive step, both were critical of the perceived USG lack of post-war planning in Iraq and said this had unleashed Iran, "the monster in the cage." In order to counter what he deems unsatisfactory progress on Iran, Al-Sager will call on regional Arab leaders to unify and collectively pressure the Iranians to engage in peaceful multilateral talks. End summary.

Kuwaitis worried, very worried over Iran

[1](#)2. (C) The Chairman of Kuwaiti Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, liberal MP Mohammad Jassem Al-Sager, declared in an October 2 news article entitled, "We are Worried, Very Worried," that Kuwaitis are increasingly concerned about Iran. He noted that Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal said after a UNGA meeting with Secretary Rice that a confrontation is "definitely coming." Al-Sager's assessment in the article was that this is especially troubling because the Saudi FM is known for his calm demeanor and care in choosing his words. He commented that the FM is normally reluctant to voice doubts publicly, and is usually optimistic that ways out of crises can always be found. While Al-Sager is solidly pro-American, in the article he expressed doubt in the ability of the United States to handle the crisis. Predictions of impending military clashes are not new to the Kuwaiti newspapers (refs B and C), but Al-Sager's position as head of the Foreign Affairs Committee makes his remarks especially significant. Al-Sager urged Kuwaitis not to continue to ignore the issue and called for greater unity among the Arab states in standing up to Iran. He also warned that suspension of Kuwait's constitution or institutions would weaken its ability to face the challenge of Iran.

Monster in the cage unleashed

[1](#)3. (C) In an October 3 meeting with Charge and visiting

NEA/ARP Deputy Director, Al Sager said that there is no security in the region. He assessed that though the U.S. removal of the Taleban and Saddam Hussein regimes were very positive steps, lack of post-war planning has resulted in the unleashing of Iran, the "monster in the cage." He added that Kuwait is "scared to death" of Iran.

Arab-Iranian summit?

¶4. (C) While lamenting the lack of GCC and regional cohesion in a policy against Iran, Al Sager told emboffs and NEA/ARP Deputy that he is launching an initiative to move from bilateral talks with Iran to a multilateral dialogue. He aims to gather senior Arab and Iranian officials in Kuwait to "pressure" the Iranians to concede to the wishes of the international community. The dialogue will focus on two issues: Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, and Iran's unique involvement in the region, notably in Iraq, and with the Palestinians and the Lebanese. According to Al Sager, the Iranian response to this initiative is very warm, while the Arab response is typically hesitant. He promised that most of the sessions would be open to the public and would likely take place in January 2008.

GOK view on Iran

¶5. (C) In a similar conversation with MFA Director of Arab World Department Ambassador Jassem Al Mubarak, also on October 3, Al-Mubarak provided the standard GOK policy soundbyte regarding Iran: The GOK prefers the diplomatic option in terms of dealing with Iran and is opposed to

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military action. Echoing Al-Sager's remarks, he said that Kuwait is afraid of Iran and possible pending military confrontation. He added that Iran is engaged in unacceptable behavior and the region needs a respite from the present levels of tension. He added that the US/EU diplomatic initiatives were not sufficient and that Iran was exploiting the current state of international disunity.

¶6. (C) Al-Mubarak added that GOK will support UN Security Council resolutions against Iran. He called on the USG to exert more pressure to bring around Russia and China, and commended both the German and French approach. He cited the lucrative trade between Iran and China as the major obstacle in developing an international consensus on Iran.

Stable Iraq = stable region

¶7. (C) Al-Mubarak stated that the best countermeasure to Iran is a peaceful and stable Iraq. Meanwhile, he added, Iran is now claiming Bahrain as part of Iran and is spending great amounts of money to buy the loyalty of the Bahrainis. He also said that his personal friend, King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa of Bahrain (Note: Al-Mubarak was recently Kuwait's ambassador to Bahrain), told him that Iran is the biggest challenge in the region.

Don't exclude Syria

¶8. (C) Al-Mubarak said that Syria is playing into Iran's hands now, but will side with its Arab neighbors if it can see that this is in its interest. He added, without elaboration, that the Syrian government needs assurances of security. If provided, he suggested that Syria will play a greater, more positive role. He exhorted the USG not to "exclude Syria" from discussions and clarified that such isolation of Syria results only in embarrassing the regional moderate states. (Comment: The wistful desire to see brother Arab state Syria wrested from Iran's orbit by conciliatory American diplomacy, rather than by coordinated

Arab/international pressure, is widely shared among our GOK interlocutors. End Comment.)

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